



Section: Youth Services: Program and Service Structure

Policy: Harassment and Bullying – Solstice School

Purpose:

Promoting civil rights and prohibiting harassment, bullying, discrimination, and hate crimes and to maintain policies and procedures that are compliant with:

- Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) c. 71 & 37H, 370E(1) & (2)
- MA DOE Criterion 20

Goals:

The Solstice Program is committed to providing our students equal educational opportunities in a safe learning environment free from harassment, bullying, discrimination, and hate crimes, where all school community members treat each other with respect and appreciate the rich diversity in our schools. This policy is an integral part of the school's comprehensive efforts to promote learning, eliminate all forms of violent, harmful, and disruptive behavior and enable students to achieve their personal and academic potential and become successful citizens in our increasingly diverse society.

Solstice will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, by students or staff, including any form of harassment, bullying, discrimination, or hate crimes in our school or school-related activities. In accordance with the Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan, Solstice will promptly document and investigate all reports and complaints of harassment, bullying, discrimination, and hate crimes, and take prompt, effective action to end that behavior and prevent its reoccurrence. Action will include, where appropriate, referral to a law enforcement agency. Solstice will support this policy in all aspects of its activities, including its curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parental involvement.

General statement of Policy:

The Solstice Program prohibits all forms of harassment, bullying, discrimination, and hate crimes based on race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability. The civil rights of all school community members are guaranteed by law, and the protection of those rights is of utmost importance and priority to our school program. Solstice also prohibits bullying of school community members or other harmful conduct for reasons unrelated to

race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability. Solstice will also not tolerate retaliation against persons who take action consistent with this policy.

In accordance with Lahey Health Behavioral Services policies on Persons Served, this policy applies to all sites and activities that the school supervises controls, or where it has jurisdiction under the law. It applies to all students, Solstice employees, independent contractors, school volunteers, parents and legal guardians of students, and visitors to school program whether the conduct occurs on school premises or in school-related activities, including in school-related transportation. Nothing in this policy, however, is designed or intended to limit the school's authority to discipline or take remedial action under General Laws Chapter 71, §37H, or in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether this policy covers the conduct.

General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51A, makes administrators, teachers, school nurses, guidance counselors and other school staff members mandated reporters for purposes of reporting child abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Under G.L. c. 119, Section 51A, a school staff member who has reasonable cause to believe that a student under the age of 18 years is suffering physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or neglect, by a parent, guardian, school staff member, or other caretaker, must immediately report the abuse or neglect either directly to the DCF or to the Education Director, or designee, who, in turn, must promptly report the abuse to the DCDF.

^[1] **Any other conduct harmful to school climate and subject to discipline is governed by the Student Code of Conduct and other Lahey Health Behavioral Services policies.** This policy only covers conduct directed at a victim because of his/her race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability, or to bullying behavior where the school has intervened with the alleged student offender under the Student Code of Conduct for bullying on two prior occasions.

^[2]Where there is a felony complaint or conviction of a student involving reported or complained-of conduct in violation of this Policy, the Education Director of the school, or designee, where the student is enrolled may decide to proceed under the requirements of General Laws Chapter 71, ' 37H2.

^[3]Experts have determined that bullying is a form of aggression involving a power imbalance between the bully and victim, where the bully has actual or perceived physical, social, and/or psychological power over his or her target(s). Bullying generally involves a pattern of conduct that is directed at a victim, rather than a single isolated incident.